

Blyth Kayak Club

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Chairpersons Report for Year 2013



The year of 2013 has again been successful for Blyth Kayak Club. As in previous years, through our pool coaching sessions we have introduced a succession of beginners, both young and mature, to the delights of kayaking and canoeing, with our core of long term members continuing to give us their support. Our successful web site continues to play a large part in the attraction of new members and I would like to thank those involved in its maintenance for working so hard in keeping regular contact with our kayaking community. I would also like to thank Lesley for continuing to oversee the booking of the pool sessions which is not an easy task.

The coaching capabilities of the club continue to expand and we have welcomed several new coaches to our ranks. I would like to thank all of the coaches for their hard work and commitment throughout the past year. I would also like to thank, as I do each year, the friends and families of our members who continue to give their support in so many different ways. Without them many of our members would be unable to participate in the sport of kayaking to the extent that they do at present.

This year the club has continued to support a wide range of sporting events across the region, including providing safety cover for triathlons at Newbiggin, Druridge Bay and The Queen Elizabeth II Park in Ashington. The weather was kinder to those events this year and all were successful with many hundreds of competitors kept safe by our members. It must be remembered that by supporting these events, a considerable amount of funding is given to the club, so thank you to all coaches and experienced members who gave up their time to attend. There have been rumours that it is the power of free bacon and chip butties that has been the real lure!

The weather was also much kinder to our annual camp in the Lakes, based at Brotherswater and it was heartening to see the large number of fairly new members who attended as well as the more experienced 'die-hards'. This is always a very successful family orientated weekend and all levels of ability as usual managed to have an extremely enjoyable time.

Unfortunately once again our plans to paddle out to the Farne Islands during our Embleton weekend, were thwarted by the weather. However instead we did enjoy the river trip from Norham to Berwick down the Tweed, a once regular paddle that we haven't attempted for several years, and a good curry followed by a few drinks at the local hostelry in the evening made sure that spirits stayed high.

Our club diary has remained very full with members attending a varied array of events across the region. These have included the May Day race at Durham where we almost swept the board of trophies. We also completed what has become the yearly event of the Tyne paddle from Newburn to Tynemouth, and again the weather looked down upon us more favourably. We once more held another very successful Family Fun Day at Druridge Lake and a fun- day for the Chernobyl children on the Wansbeck.

Our relationship with the Royal Northumberland Yacht Club has continued to develop which resulted this year in partnering with them to accompany the tall ship that visited Blyth in the summer, on her farewell sail down the river and out to sea. This was a most exhilarating experience and worth what proved to be a long wait, made cooler for some by the kindly spray from our local life- boat!

Many other events this year are worthy of note, such as the paddle at Longhoughton followed by the BBQ on the beach, eating mackerel caught on the paddle – the most fresh and tasty meal ever. Also the paddles out to Coquet Island to see the fascinating colony of seals, and the rather challenging paddle by more experienced members, in rough and windy seas, to experience the Foghorn Symphony at Souter Lighthouse.

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All of the members of the committee have again worked extremely hard this year given that they are all volunteers with jobs and families, and I would like to thank them on behalf of all of our members for their continued devotion and commitment.

On a personal note I would also like to thank all of the committee members and many other members of the club, who supported me so compassionately when my husband died suddenly at the end of February. I know that as a result of this I have this year not been able to give as much of a commitment to the club as I would have liked but they have proved to be loyal and true friends.

I am sure that in 2014 the club will continue to go from strength to strength and that we will continue to introduce many more new paddlers, young and old, to the sport of paddling; I am sure that everyone is looking forward to yet more enjoyable paddles to come.

Happy paddling.

Pat Jones

Pat Jones - Club Chairperson